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ABSTRACT

The history and current nature of local race relations work in Britain are reviewed in this paper. The development from voluntary local committees in the 1950s through the establishment of the national Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) in 1976 is traced. It is shown that the functions of local work have changed from those of information, education, and welfare, to the assessment of the racial equality needs of the area, effective development of community groups and minority organizations, public education, organization of community projects, and individual casework. Resulting changes in the duties of community relations officers are pointed out. The strengths and weaknesses of the present structure of the community relations councils are discussed. The relationships between the CRE and the local councils, including the CRE's influence on the local councils, are examined. Several models for a revised structure for local race relations work are outlined. (MC)

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THE NATURE AND STRUCTURE OF LOCAL WORK FOR RACIAL EQUALITY

A Paper for Discussion

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CONTENTS

	<i>Paragraphs</i>	<i>Page</i>
1. PREAMBLE	1.1-1.6	1
2. HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES	2.1-2.8	3
3. THE NATURE OF LOCAL WORK	3.1-3.5	6
4. THE PRESENT STRUCTURE, ITS STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES	4.1-4.22	9
5. A STRUCTURE FOR THE FUTURE	5.1-5.5	16
6. APPENDIX IMPLICATIONS OF MODELS OF CRC CONSTITUTION AND CRO EMPLOYMENT		

THE NATURE AND STRUCTURE OF LOCAL WORK FOR RACIAL EQUALITY

Preamble

- 1.1 The Commission's *Strategy Statement* (October 1977) saw the local network of community relations councils as, "essential to the work of the CRE; their potential as allies in the fight for equality of opportunity and racial harmony cannot be overestimated. With this in mind we plan a radical review of the local network in consultation with the National Association of Community Relations Councils and representatives of the professional staffs. The objective will be a clearer common strategy, higher standards of local performance, greater involvement of ethnic minorities, and appropriate support from the CRE".
- 1.2 Implicit in this declaration is the recognition that the Commission needs allies at local level. The 1976 Race Relations Act gave the Commission considerable powers to work for racial equality, but the work of the national statutory body needs to be complemented by efforts within local communities, where the problems of racial discrimination and disadvantage appear and must be solved. The three principal allies to whom the Commission must look are local authorities, whose responsibility in this sphere has been heightened by Section 71 of the Act, ethnic minority organisations and the distinctive union of voluntary and professional effort which has developed into the local community relations movement.
- 1.3 It is all too easy for those working in race relations to overlook the fundamental question of whether community relations councils and community relations officers are necessary at all. There have always been those who have seen the community relations movement as a buffer and who would prefer a situation, local and national, in which strong ethnic minority organisations campaign directly for better provision for their needs by the statutory services. Race relations workers themselves have for years talked about, "working themselves out of a job".
- 1.4 There are good grounds for concluding that the disappearance at this stage of the pressure group role represented by local community relations workers would create a serious vacuum in the campaign for equality of opportunity and good race relations. CRCs and CROs make a unique contribution in enlisting to this campaign the statutory and voluntary elements, the lay and the professional, and black and white. The convergence of these elements in common action for racial justice is itself a contributory factor to improved understanding and better relations. It is, however, essential to examine how the nature of community relations work has changed, and to assess how far its developing character necessitates changes in the local structure. It is with this review that the rest of this paper will be concerned. We must also keep in mind the roles and the views of the other "local allies", ethnic minority organisations and local authorities. The views of community relations councils and officers on the issues in this paper are of great importance but must be considered in the wider context of local action.

- 1.5 Pending this review, the Commission agreed to honour the agreements concluded by its predecessor with NACRC and ASTMS for the regulation of its relationship with community relations councils and community relations officers. It agreed to recognise NACRC as the appropriate consultative body for all policy matters affecting community relations councils, and ASTMS as the sole negotiating body for all union matters affecting community relations officers. Informal bilateral discussions have been held with the National Association of Community Relations Councils, whilst the Commission also took receipt of a request by the Community Relations Officers' Group of ASTMS that it should introduce central employment of CROs. ASTMS made it clear that it wished to negotiate its central employment claim before becoming involved in any more general tripartite machinery for consultation and negotiation on matters affecting CRCs and CROs.
- 1.6 This Paper for Discussion has therefore been prepared to enable the Commission to complete its radical review of the local network and to provide the context in which the Commission can respond to the request for central employment. The Paper proceeds from an outline of the history of the local network, through an attempted definition of the present nature of the work, a discussion of the present structure, with its strengths and weaknesses, to a survey of several possible models for future local work.

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES

- 2.1 The development of local race relations work has followed a pattern familiar in British social services of response to need through the coming together of local people who organise themselves to do something to help. From the early '950s, in response to post-war immigration initially from the West Indies, there was a spontaneous development of local committees in the areas of settlement which attempted to help the immigrants settle into their new lives. The work of these committees, which in their earliest form acted as "hosts", was highly valued and the need for greater co-ordination and development of these "liaison committees" led to a series of national committees between 1962 and 1965 when the Prime Minister appointed the National Committee for Commonwealth Immigrants (NCCI). The 1965 White Paper *Immigration from the Commonwealth* made the first attempt to define the work and experience of the thirty voluntary liaison committees as providing "the necessary focal point in their areas for the co-ordination of effort and a channel for the exchange of information, ideas and experience. Above all they help to create a climate of mutual tolerance in which the stupidity of racial prejudice cannot survive". Under the White Paper Government funds were also made available for the first time through the NCCI for the employment of local officers by the Voluntary Liaison Committees.
- 2.2 The White Paper saw the work of voluntary liaison committees as falling under three main headings: Information, Education and Welfare. By providing funds for the NCCI to support the voluntary liaison committees, the Government set the pattern for local race relations work primarily as a service to help newcomers come to terms with the British way of life, to integrate into society and its services and to combat racial prejudice by public education. The structure of voluntary liaison committees, co-ordinated by a national body was directly influenced by the White Paper in which the Government laid down three conditions for success; voluntary immigrant and host community participation, local authority involvement and a non-sectarian, non-political stance.
- 2.3 The 1968 Race Relations Act replaced the NCCI with two new statutory agencies, the Race Relations Board, which had a quasi-judicial responsibility for acts of racial discrimination, and the Community Relations Commission, whose main duty was, "to encourage the establishment of, and assist others to take steps to secure the establishment of, harmonious community relations and to co-ordinate on a national basis the measures adopted for that purpose by others". The Commission was given funds to assist local organisations and the voluntary liaison committees changed their names to Community Relations Councils. The task now for local race relations work was to promote, "harmonious community relations", but neither the Act nor the Commission during its existence defined what this meant and many CRCs worked in a very similar way to the voluntary liaison committees. For a time the Commission continued the NCCI's work of actively encouraging the creation of new CRCs with the same structure as voluntary liaison committees. It is interesting that, even after

passage of the 1968 Act, the 1965 White Paper was still seen as the primary source of Government policy for the development of the local committees. More remarkable still, the White Paper is sometimes quoted today as the fullest available Government statement of how local CRCs should work and be financed.

2.4 Although the task of "harmonious community relations" was not defined, a number of suggestions from 1968 onwards were made to identify the aims and functions of local race relations work and to determine the most appropriate structure. The task had changed since the early creation of voluntary liaison committees, many immigrants had settled and raised children born in the United Kingdom, and the Immigration Acts had severely restricted new immigration. As a result, many CRCs lacking a definitive lead on what "harmonious community relations" meant, developed new areas of work particularly in campaigning for social change in housing, education, employment, social services etc, which sometimes brought them into conflict with the providing agencies (local authorities in particular), and developed programmes of work aimed at combating racial discrimination and promoting equality of opportunity. Other CRCs carried on the same work as the voluntary liaison committees and many CRCs developed a mixture between the two. Throughout the late sixties and early seventies therefore, local race relations work was varied but sometimes lacked clear aims.

2.5 In a study of local CRC's published in 1971, Hill and Issacharoff argued that:—

- (i) the community relations movement has suffered severely from lack of clarity about its *aims*. Appropriate structures must be designed to serve agreed aims, but the Commission has given more attention to the structure of local CRCs and the job definition of CROs than to the overall objectives and policies of community relations.
- (ii) the Government's supposed aims of promoting racial harmony and promoting racial equality are not necessarily compatible. The aim of racial equality requires a strategy for change.
- (iii) the structure of CRCs, being based on a theory of consensus, is not suited to achieving change.
- (iv) pressure groups at local level which will constantly examine local authorities' and other agencies' policies are essential, and they can only be effective with Government backing.
- (v) therefore CRCs should be appointed by the Commission without the constraint of local voluntary committees. They would then be able to bring into existence advisory committees and grass roots pressure groups.
- (vi) the Commission could play a vital role in supporting such pressure groups, and stimulating government backing for them where necessary.

Local race relations work was having to cope with changed circumstances. By the middle seventies, it was realised that CRCs were no longer the local Community expressing goodwill to the new immigrants but a group of white and black people struggling to promote racial equality in the face of both a bewildered, hostile white population who did not like large numbers of black people in their midst, and the increasing strength of racist and neo-fascist groups.

- 2.6 Between 1970 and 1973 the Community Relations Commission inaugurated a debate on the proposal for central employment of CROs. As no consensus was reached, attempts were made to rationalise the existing relationships through the development of joint consultative procedures with the National Association of Community Relations Councils and the CROs Group of ASTMS.
- 2.7 Early in 1975 renewed attention was given to the structure of the work when the Select Committee on Race Relations and Immigration announced an enquiry into, "the organisation of race relations administration". The Committee finally recommended that CROs should be centrally employed and seconded to CRCs. The 1975 White Paper *Racial Discrimination*, published just after the Select Committee Report, made no specific recommendations on the future of local race relations work; however, the Minister of State, Alex Lyon, had opened up the discussion by canvassing a proposal for local authorities to employ CROs. NACRC suggested constitutional changes of CRCs to reflect greater clarity of aims and a wider membership, increased staffing for CRCs and regional bodies working to NACRC who would have a prime responsibility for field-work. The Runnymede Trust proposed an independent Inspectorate accountable to the Home Secretary, directly employing local officers who would be advised by local nominated advisory committees. The CROs Group of ASTMS supported the recommendations of the Select Committee, wishing to see CROs fully seconded to local CRCs. Finally in December 1975 the Government's position was announced by the Home Secretary in a statement to Parliament in which he said that responsibility for CRCs and their funding would be vested in the new Commission for Racial Equality.
- 2.8 Under the Race Relations Act 1976 the Community Relations Commission and the Race Relations Board were abolished and the Commission for Racial Equality took office in June 1977 with the two main duties of:—

“(a) working towards the elimination of discrimination

(b) promoting equality of opportunity and good relations between persons of different racial groups generally”.

Although the Government, through the Home Secretary's statements, had indicated the immediate future for CRCs, the new tasks and functions of the Commission created the climate for a reopening of the debate on the structure of local work. Not long after taking office the Commission announced that it would undertake a review but, until a decision on the future had been reached,

it would honour the previous Commission's arrangements. ASTMS formally presented a claim for the central employment of CROs and meetings were held with the Commission's officers in pursuit of the claim. However, the Commission decided that a response to the ASTMS claim could be made only when the review had taken place and after full consultation on the future structure.

THE NATURE OF LOCAL WORK

- 3.1 Before we examine the present structure of local work and the problems which arise within it, it is necessary to determine the nature of local work being carried out. The Commission must also assure itself that the type of work it is supporting is, in the words of Section 44 (1) of the Race Relations Act "concerned with the promotion of equality of opportunity, and good relations, between persons of different racial groups".
- 3.2 There is a general recognition that local work has developed further than functions of "information, education and welfare" seen as necessary in 1965. It has also been suggested that the "community forum" function of a community relations council has given way to the need for a more action-oriented local campaign for racial equality, in which both professional officers and committed volunteers have a part to play. There are now more channels than in 1965 for the expression of ethnic minority and equal opportunity needs: established agencies like the police and local authorities have appointed liaison officers and community development officers, there has been a growth in community/neighbourhood groups and ethnic minority organisations, and gradually more members of ethnic minorities are becoming active in local authorities and political parties. Volunteers are as likely to be working for racial equality within other community organisations as within the local community relations councils. These are factors which change the nature of, rather than diminish, the need for effective local community relations work.
- 3.3 What kinds of action for racial equality can be taken locally and should the Commission be supporting? Nearly all the present activities of community relations councils can be classified within the following five broad functions, which CRCs fulfil in varying degrees:
 - (i) *Assessing the racial equality needs of their area* and keeping under review the provision of equal opportunity and related policies locally. From this assessment, devising a strategy for action, and making recommendations to local statutory and voluntary agencies and professional workers, both about policy and about day-to-day practices. Acting as a local reference point for advice about racial equality. The development of equal opportunity policies and work with local authorities (in the light of Section 71) has taken on renewed importance with the implementation of the new Race Relations Act.
 - (ii) *Work for the effective development of community groups and ethnic*

minority organisations. There are increasing efforts on the part of black groups to organise in order to meet needs on a self-help basis and to articulate needs to the authorities. Many CRCs and CROs assist such groups in campaigning, fund raising and the organisation of advice services and projects, and encourage the development of self-determination by these groups.

- (iii) *Public Education.* CRCs and CROs work with the mass media (e.g. local radio and newspapers) and with a range of other opinion-formers in an effort to provide factual information and influence community attitudes. They organise social and cultural activities designed to establish the multi-cultural character of our society. There has been a recent development of specific campaigns against racism.
- (iv) *Organisation of Community Projects* and assistance to other organisations in their project work. Such projects are often addressed to the problems of urban deprivation and are designed to fill gaps in existing provision or, preferably, serve as demonstration projects designed to convince existing services of local needs and to display ways of meeting them. Other projects are addressed to the special needs of ethnic minorities, both to mitigate linguistic and cultural disadvantages and to counteract discriminatory practices and attitudes. Such projects provide the CRC with valuable information and experience about problems which create a firm professional base for effective campaigning.
- (v) Considerable effort is still invested in *individual casework*. This work arises because there may be no appropriate local agency which can assist the individual with a problem (e.g. passport and immigration matters), or the individual may lack the knowledge of the appropriate agency or the confidence to visit it, or may require linguistic or other interpretation. The new complaints procedures of the 1976 Race Relations Act have increased the range of individual cases which may be brought to CROs in the first instance. Every effort is made to refer individual problems to appropriate agencies where this can be done, but this function is still accepted by CROs and CRCs because of the need to create confidence within the minority communities and credibility in the CROs own effectiveness, and because he/she must remain constantly aware of the problems faced by ethnic minorities in order to make an effective case to the appropriate authority.

3.4 These activities can perhaps best be summarised as policy development among statutory and voluntary agencies, attitude change in the community at large, and community development among ethnic minorities. Any independent mechanism or structure for local work should therefore attempt to operate as an expert partner both of the local authority (and similar agencies) in the determined pursuit of a racial equality strategy, and of ethnic minorities in their efforts to identify and meet their own needs with confidence and cohesion. It is this role of sharing objectives and expertise with the other two potential local allies in the racial equality struggle which marks the continued justification of the operation of an independent local community relations structure.

3.5 Such a re-appraisal of the key areas of local work would entail a revision of the document *Duties of a Community Relations Officer* circulated by the former Community Relations Commission. It is perhaps by setting out a revision of these duties that the functions of local racial equality work can best be illustrated. The Commission is aware that particular local conditions must be taken into consideration in any definition of the duties of a Community Relations Officer. The following description is therefore suggested as a general guide but is not intended to be exclusive. A Community Relations Officer who serves as a chief officer for a local government area might be responsible for the following functions:

1. assessing the needs of his area in matters of racial equality and monitoring the local effects of relevant policies.
2. devising a programme of action aimed at securing the elimination of racial discrimination, and the promotion of equality of opportunity, and good relations, between persons of different racial groups, through
 - (i) co-operating with, and making recommendations to, the local authorities, other local statutory and voluntary agencies; professional workers, including teachers, social workers, both sides of industry and the police.
 - (ii) where necessary, campaigning for changes in policies, practices and attitudes.
3. acting as a local reference point for enquiries and advice about matters of racial equality.
4. assisting all local organisations working towards equality of opportunity and good relations and in particular, advising and assisting in the effective self-development of ethnic minority organisations.
5. conducting a programme of public education aimed at influencing attitudes to racial equality and at stimulating activities designed to establish the multi-cultural character of society.
6. promoting and, if necessary, organising community projects designed to promote equality of opportunity or good race relations, and where appropriate seeking the adoption of such projects by statutory or other agencies.
7. referring persons who make contact with individual needs and problems to the services and facilities best equipped to solve those problems.
8. undertaking directly only so much individual casework as is necessary to maintain the confidence of individuals and groups presenting the cases, and to maintain his own awareness of the problems faced by different communities.

9. representing (or obtaining representation for) individuals or groups where the community relations officer or his colleagues has a special role or expertise in the nature of the case presented (e.g. cases under the Race Relations Act 1976).
10. taking opportunities to increase his knowledge and understanding of the problems of racial equality, and the way in which these are tackled in other areas.
11. supervising the work of any supporting community relations officers or assistant community relations officers who may be attached to him.

The job of community relations officer is an exacting one, calling for energy and initiative and the willingness to work flexible and unsocial hours. It is essential that the officer should regularly attend a wide variety of evening and weekend meetings and social activities and become a familiar figure in the area, in whom representatives of every ethnic group can have confidence when difficulties arise. This is a job which cannot be done in the confines of an office or of regular office hours.

THE PRESENT STRUCTURE, ITS STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- 4.1 This section surveys the structures which currently exist for the performance of the functions just described, analyses their strengths and weaknesses and examines the capacity of the Commission to influence the structures to best effect.
- 4.2 There are at present 98 Community Relations Councils listed in the Commission's Directory, displaying great unevenness and variety. They range from councils with large offices and upwards of 20 staff to small groups of individuals without any professional staff. The majority of CRCs, however, have less than three professional officers. They occupy the majority of local government areas where there is any substantial settlement of ethnic minorities, and have generally tended to develop within one, occasionally two, local government districts. There are now a few examples of county structures, both in non-metropolitan and in metropolitan counties.
- 4.3 Almost without exception, community relations councils have a large *general council* membership of individuals, local authority representatives and above all voluntary organisations. These general councils elect annually an *executive committee* with the functions of policy-maker and employer of professional staff. The large majority of CRCs conform broadly to the Commission's model constitution, which recommends quotas of membership and the means of electing executive committees to manage the Council's affairs. Some councils have appointed smaller management Committees or general purposes committees which carry more day to day responsibilities than their executives. All

Community Relations Councils are independent, with the exception of two which are technically sub-committees of their local authorities, and of one in which the members of the general committee serve as the nominees of the Commission. There are also examples of councils which simply ask local organisations to nominate representatives but avoid an internal election process, and those which involve the full council in decision making without a separate executive committee. As well as these different models of management, there are different styles and traditions within the same model: some CRCs have strong executives, of which the CRO is very clearly the paid servant, whilst in others a considerable measure of the responsibility for policy formulation is entrusted to the professional officers who seek ratification of their proposals from the executive committee.

- 4.4 Local authority involvement is most clearly expressed through councillor representation on community relations councils (often up to 6 members nominated to the executive committees) and through financial assistance. Most community relations councils have their office accommodation, secretarial help and other administrative costs fully met by their local authorities, which, in some areas, also contribute funds to projects and for the employment of additional professional officers. The Commission normally pays the salaries of the Chief Officer of each community relations council and 1, 2 or 3 other officers. Beyond the principle of joint funding by central and local government enunciated in the 1965 White Paper (see para. 2.3), it is noticeable that there are no clear guidelines for the involvement of local authorities in the work of CRCs. There are consequently wide variations, but the most positive authorities make substantial financial contributions and participate in joint consultative machinery with their CRCs.
- 4.5 There are three main strengths within the present structure. Owing to its local independent and autonomous character, it is highly responsive to local needs and priorities. It provides a range of opportunities for the involvement of volunteers, whilst at the same time giving them a role in policy formulation and some professional staff to execute their policy. It also involves local authorities in the policy making and financing of the work. As essentially local bodies with wide representation and statutory backing, community relations councils are in a potentially favourable position to campaign for policy changes with their local authorities.
- 4.6 It is inevitable in such a review, however, that more attention will be paid to the weaknesses of the present structure, since these are the features which have led to the suggestion of improvements and alternatives. The criticisms voiced range from a questioning of the nature and composition of community relations councils as the most appropriate mechanism for the local advancement of racial equality to the more "professional" discipline of paid officers.
- 4.7 Although reflecting differences from area to area, the constitutions of most

CRCs have not undergone any radical change since their inception. For financial reasons the majority of CRCs prefer to retain charitable status and are thereby bound to "aims and objects" clauses seeking to "advance the education of the inhabitants" which sounded archaic even in the late 1960s. There have been attempts, notably by the National Association of Community Relations Councils, to bring aims and objects clauses up-to-date and into line with the racial equality purpose of the CRE, and a few CRCs have changed their names to councils of racial equality. It is open to debate whether such changes can in themselves have more than a cosmetic effect on the impact which these bodies make locally.

4.8 The other main constitutional feature which has given rise to debate is the composition of community relations councils. Since the mid 1960s CRCs have largely been constructed on the model of councils of social service, some even began life as sub-committees of councils of social service. The emphasis has been on wide representation, and the extra dimension which CRCs bring to the CSS model is the involvement of ethnic minorities. The question being asked is whether, thirteen years after the White Paper which first provided Government funds for CRCs, the "forum" type of structure is still valid for a body oriented towards local action for racial equality. It is sometimes argued that the existing composition does not sufficiently involve or motivate those committed to working for racial equality. Without fully spelling out how this can be done, NACRC propose that future membership of CRCs should be restricted to those with such a commitment. It is probably true that some of the variations of the representational model have worked well in some places and badly in others, with much depending on the approach of key officers, like the Chairman and CRO, and on the attitude of the local authority. Some people have questioned the fundamental premise of a voluntary movement (co-ordinated and funded by a statutory body) acting as the employer of a professional social service, although this type of relationship is by no means peculiar to community relations councils.

4.9 Some community relations councils have had great difficulty in maintaining an adequate level of ethnic minority involvement. The reasons for this are as many and varied as the reasons for the absence in many areas of an effective network of ethnic minority organisations; but the tendency to cling to the "representational" compositions and the welfare objectives of the fifties and sixties has also diminished the relevance of some CRCs to current ethnic minority needs. The model constitution provides a notional "ethnic quota" (one-third) for the membership of CRCs, whilst some councils go further by basing their executive committee on specific quotas for different ethnic origins. Successful involvement of ethnic minorities is most likely, however, in those CRCs which pursue up-to-date racial equality objectives and which see themselves as partners and resource centres for the black organisations in their areas.

4.10 Many people feel that the lack of progress in improving the status of ethnic minorities since the sixties is due in part to the absence of any means of formulating nationally co-ordinated policies for CRCs. Not everyone involved in CRCs

is agreed that this is a desirable objective, and its attainment is inhibited by the local autonomy of CRCs. A system which makes all Commission funded officers the spokesmen of different bodies supports the view that the Commission is paying a cadre of professional officers to execute widely diverse policies. The solution favoured by ASTMS (in calling for centralised employment of CROs) and by NACRC (in advocating continued local employment) is basically the same; the strengthening of the former joint arrangements for national policy matters (even after centralisation when they might arguably be absorbed within the Commission staff and its unions). The Commission and NACRC, on the other hand, have stressed the member officer unity within CRCs and the potential for CROs to increase their policy making role at local level.

- 4.11 Mention was made in paragraph 4.3 of the variations in management structure among CRCs. The absence of a sound and standard management model (even if complete standardisation were possible within a voluntary movement) has sometimes laid CRCs open to charges of a lack of management or financial control. It is important to recognise that the local CRC is liable in law as an employer and that personnel management is, at least legally, a much more complex matter than it was even in 1965. There are wide discrepancies in the capacity of CRCs for effective supervision, and such weaknesses are often admitted by even the most conscientious CRC chairmen. Those selected to CRC executives include many who are by definition amateurs and who receive no training in management, especially personnel management, functions. To officers who believe they have suffered from management shortcomings, the prospect of employment by a professional central body appears attractive.
- 4.12 When management difficulties arise, the claim is sometimes advanced that it is the system of local employment which creates these difficulties. It seems unlikely, however, that central employment adopted in isolation would eliminate them. Far from reducing the number of conflicts, central employment might increase them, since it would be almost too easy for a disgruntled officer or council to give up in a difficult relationship, and pass the problem to the Commission by requesting a transfer. Local employment, while making transfers difficult, at least forces officers and councils in the main to live with each other's weaknesses, a situation which is normal within the employer/employee relationship. It might be possible to create a "transfer list" even without centralisation and without relieving CRCs of the need to face up to their responsibilities as employers. Or, it might be argued that the only real solution is centralisation accompanied by radical changes in the nature of the local committees. Some would argue for a redefinition of roles, so that the professional officer became the focus of local work and was assisted by an advisory committee.
- 4.13 From their experience of officer/council difficulties, ASTMS have described the existing disputes procedures as unwieldy and complex. Underlying this claim there are two truths:
- (i) The procedures appear complex to inexperienced members of CRCs who, owing to the turnover in membership, may find themselves

reading the national disputes agreements for the first time in the middle of a crisis;

- (ii) They are found to be unwieldy by ASTMS which, although it has plenty of experience in operating such procedures, finds it frustrating that it has to deal first with lay committees and cannot turn immediately to the Commission when one of its members is in difficulty.

4.14 The pressures on CRCs and CROs to co-exist is paralleled by the pressure which many CROs attribute to politically antipathetic local authorities. There are certainly CROs whose local standing is made insecure and CRCs whose work is badly supported by an unsympathetic approach from their local authority. Central employment might provide a cushion of added security, since the national body would be bound to give its paid officers a consistent minimum level of support, but this to some extent ignores what the CRCs and CROs function is all about. A CRC which feels emboldened to adopt a defiant attitude towards a local authority may be jeopardising the success of local efforts to sensitise the authority to racial equality needs. The CROs and CRCs job, while not being to compromise with or kow-tow to the authority, is certainly concerned with getting even the least sympathetic authorities to do some of the right things. The most effective pressure on any local authority is local pressure, and the best guarantee for the CRO in difficulty with the Town Hall is therefore the solid backing of his council, on which the local authority is normally represented.

4.15 Critics of local employment have pointed to a lack of mobility and career prospects for locally-employed officers. This is also of concern to the Commission, since local employment prevents the Commission from ensuring that the most competent officers are placed in areas where their services are most needed and from ensuring that they are retained in the service by the prospect of greater responsibility. Central employment would facilitate flexible deployment of officers and assist career development for the most able. The corollary is also true, that the Commission, and, for that matter, the officers' union, might be faced with a group of officers with a reputation for being "difficult to place", and it is not hard to imagine a CRC grapevine developing which warned CRCs off accepting certain CROs. This pre-supposes that officers would be more willing to be mobile than they are at present: the available evidence suggests that officers of average ability who really want to move can normally find a new post within the field. Some progress might be achieved through the introduction of either a transfer system without centralisation or of a central recruitment process, but it is clear that the greatest scope for mobility and redeployment would lie with a change to a single employment body.

4.16 A change in employment arrangements has also been heralded as a means to a more professional and better trained cadre of CROs. Central employment might help in this, but more sophisticated and appropriate training and improved fieldwork support would also go a long way towards meeting this need. A proper system of pre-entry training might make the biggest single contribution.

- 4.17 Community Relations Councils are sometimes said to be susceptible to manipulation and takeovers, causing their professional officers to spend too much of their time in dealing with internal politics. Most people would agree that effort has been wasted in community relations councils on constitutional wrangles, election allegations and similar matters, although one of the perpetual difficulties in community relations work is to distinguish internal politics from sincere and legitimate differences over the approach to the work. The extent to which the existence of argumentative, infiltrated or unrepresentative committees is seen as a major malaise of the present system will determine how drastic a reform is necessary. For this weakness central employment would be only a partial remedy; it might enable an officer to become more detached from the politicking, but might still leave him with considerable conciliatory and administrative work to carry out. It would also not prevent a Committee from agitation against an officer. Another possible solution might be to reform the structure of local committees, perhaps in the direction of appointed committees, which might be more likely to "minimise the aggro" at source. It is unlikely, however, that in such a sensitive field internal disputes will be completely eliminated.
- 4.18 Although community relations councils have preserved their local and autonomous character, many people have come to feel that, with their present constitution, the concept of democratic control is only a façade. CRCs are so easily subject to the pressures and influence of different interest groups. *Which* groups still depend very much on the origins and subsequent development of an individual CRC; different CRCs have had a "militant", "establishment" or "quiescent" character for many years. Changes in this character may sometimes be achieved by undemocratic means. Although not truly "democratic", CRCs may, however, be locally responsible in a way that appointed committees, would probably not be. One disadvantage of appointed committees is that, once a group of individuals had obtained their seats on the committee, they could rapidly become out of tune with local feeling. The temptation to tell individuals that they are appointed in their own right, and not as representatives of their organisations, would assist this tendency.
- 4.19 This examination of some of the criticisms of the present system has highlighted the two main questions which need to be answered in order that local work for racial equality can settle and make progress. How should the local committees be formed, and how should professional officers be employed? There is a strong feeling, at least among the national bodies, that the established representational model of community relations council is out of date, and that what is needed is a more action-oriented mechanism for achieving racial equality, and the involvement of people committed to that objective. The question of how professional officers should be recruited and employed in turn has a bearing on the function of the local committee. Should it be an employer, should it be a policy-maker or should it be an adviser to a professional service? When that is decided, how should a committee be formed; by membership application, by election, by appointment? There may even be a prior question before these questions can be answered: namely, given the changed circumstances since 1965 and the changed priorities of the 1976 Race Relations Act, should the focus of local work be the local committee or the professional officer?

4.20 These questions are not for the Commission alone to answer, but the Commission's position as a major provider of funds to local community relations work lends great importance to the views which it forms on that work. Section 44 of the Act gives the Commission an unfettered discretion in the use of its grant-aid so that, although the Commission cannot decide the future course of a voluntary movement, it does have the power to decide which activities and which structures it will assist. Its function in grant aiding community relations councils for the employment of CROs has been regulated to date by *Conditions of Grant Aid*. This document, adopted by agreement with the National Association of Community Relations Councils and the Community Relations Officers' Group of ASTMS, includes twelve conditions with which a community relations council must comply in order to be eligible for continued funding. These include the provision of information (area to be served, ethnic composition, local authority support, etc.), the adoption of an approved constitution, agreement to abide by the Commission's procedures for the appointment, training and assessment of officers, and the observation of formal agreements negotiated between the CRE, ASTMS and NACRC. The Commission has also set out six criteria for the withdrawal of grant-aid; although these are drawn fairly broadly, the Commission has undertaken that any withdrawal would occur only after full discussion with the Council concerned and after NACRC and ASTMS had been notified of intent. The sanctions for non-observance of grant-aid are draconian, either to refuse to fund in the first place or to withdraw grant-aid for the employment of paid staff. They have therefore been little used; in practice, the Commission recognises that it would need a watertight case before withdrawing grant aid. It is also aware of the publicity effects of such action and of the need to go on working with local people after taking action.

4.21 There are a number of lesser influences which the Commission can exercise over the work of CRCs:

- (i) It requires them to re-apply annually for renewal of grant aid, which entails the supply by CRCs of updated information about their work. This gives the Commission an opportunity to query points which may concern it.
- (ii) The Commission can use its discretion in allocating any new CRO/ACRO posts to ensure that the CRCs which benefit are those most closely pursuing its own objectives and those which are most assiduous in defining and implementing their own priorities.
- (iii) The selection procedures make clear that the appointment of Commission funded officers is subject to the approval of the Commission and to that end the Commission appoints a non-voting representative to CRCs selection Committees. In practice, however, the Commission waives its rights to veto appointments once the short list has been agreed.
- (iv) CROs and ACROs are required to undergo training organised centrally by the Commission. The Commission could wield a considerable doctrinal influence through such training, but has not so far used training to impose any hard and fast view of the work. It also

involves outside agencies in its training programmes. Satisfactory completion of training is a pre-requisite of promotion within the service and, in certain cases, of salary increments. There is an assessment procedure for all newly appointed CROs and ACROs and probation requirements for new entrants to the service, in both of which processes the Commission is involved.

- (v) Although no formal procedures for this exist, the Commission has on occasion initiated enquiries into the affairs of local CRCs by agreement with the Councils concerned.

4.22 Whilst a reading of the procedures suggests a heavy handed role for the Commission, the practice is somewhat different. Most of the procedures have been negotiated with NACRC and ASTMS, the Commission seldom intervenes unilaterally and it is not in a position to dictate policy to local CRCs. The extent to which the Commission influences the work of CRCs depends largely upon their relationships with its staff, particularly the Field Officers. The Commission has before it a constant choice of whether to continue a laissez-faire approach in relation to the development of local work or whether to seek a more interventionist role in order to forge a nationwide campaign for the promotion of equality of opportunity and good relations between racial groups. This might entail a more prescriptive approach to the types of activity and structure which it is prepared to fund and could introduce the concept of "planning agreements" between the Commission and local bodies to achieve certain objectives. If there is to be increased activation of the Commission's latent powers, there is much to be said for using these to establish broad criteria and a common direction for all local bodies, rather than their selective use in the case of one or two particular local difficulties. Selective withdrawals of grant aid in an effort to "solve" local disputes would bring disproportionate publicity while doing little to advance racial equality on a nationwide basis. This discussion is relevant mainly to the continued employment of CROs by local committees; under the option of central employment, the Commission would have more direct means of projecting its policies into local effort but would sensibly still need to undertake joint planning in consultation with local Committees.

A STRUCTURE FOR THE FUTURE

- 5.1 In this section an attempt is made to outline several models for a structure for local race relations work which must serve the needs of the present and the immediate future. In discussion of these models, it is important to keep in mind all that has been said elsewhere in this paper about the strengths and weaknesses of the structure which has emerged since the fifties. Undoubtedly, no one model will solve all the problems, while at the same time preserving the better features of the current structure. Nor are the models set out here necessarily exclusive: there may be other models, or other variations on the models, which offer greater advantages. It would seem preferable, however, when this Document

has been fully discussed, that one model should be selected which can be used as the standard base for the development of local work to make it more effective, yet will still be susceptible to change and variation.

- 5.2 It must also be remembered that we do not have a clean slate on which to draw an entirely new structure. A national network already exists, through which many committed people, voluntary and professional, are striving to achieve a just society for black and white. At the same time it is necessary to ensure that their efforts are not frustrated by structural defects which are capable of remedy. Any changed structure will present its own problems and may entail a painful transition. In discussion of all the models it is necessary to bear in mind the basic question: "How can the statutory and voluntary elements in local race relations work be brought together in a way which enables both professional officers and volunteers to work most effectively towards specific objectives?"
- 5.3 Each model is described in the following paragraphs. The likely implications of each model for the various parties involved are shown in the attached chart.

Model 1. The Status Quo

Local autonomous community relations councils would continue to employ CROs. Within this model, certain improvements might be introduced, for example:—

- (i) Changes in constitutions to ensure better management and financial control (e.g. creation of small management sub-committees). Improved machinery for policy formulation.
- (ii) Reform of the basis of membership to minimise the impact of vested interests, and to involve a more committed and active membership.
- (iii) Improved recruitment procedures, training of CROs and volunteers, improved conditions of service and conditions of grant-aid. Further development of national joint agreements.
- (iv) Development of "agreed policy and priority" plans between CRCs and the Commission.
- (v) Reforms in the county and district bases of CRCs to ensure more rational geographical coverage.

This model would retain most of the strengths and weaknesses of the present structure. It is the model which allows the greatest diversity in local policies for racial equality.

Model 2: CRCs as Constituted with Central Recruitment

CRCs would remain as constituted (or as improved) under Model 1, remaining as the employers of CROs, but with recruitment undertaken centrally by a consortium of CRE and CRC personnel. Central recruitment would probably entail:

- (i) a trawl of serving officers;
- (ii) where trawl failed to produce suitable candidates, public advertisement of a number of posts;
- (iii) shortlisting and interviews by a central panel;
- (iv) from successful candidates, the local CRC offered a shortlist of candidates (say, between 3 and 5) to make an appointment.

This process, in a more tentative form, was tried by the former Community Relations Commission. It enabled a more rigorous and consistent interviewing of CRO applicants in an effort to identify those who fulfilled minimum professional standards for service as CROs/ACROs. There is insufficient evidence as to whether it fulfilled its main objective, i.e. to raise the quality of professional officers recruited; it may have given CRC selection committees more guidance on the qualities being sought. It resulted in frustration among applicants deemed suitable for appointment but not offered a post. Otherwise the model has all the strengths and weaknesses of Model 1.

Model 3: Central Employment of CROs

CRCs would remain as constituted in Model 1, with CROs recruited and employed by the Commission and seconded to work with CRCs. This is the model recommended by the Select Committee on Race Relations and Immigration and subsequently accepted by ASTMS. It might therefore be regarded as an opportunity to transform CROs into Commission staff, with all the benefits this would offer them as employees and with the potential for the Commission to pursue consistent local policies for racial equality. As supported by ASTMS, however, the model would allow for maximum local autonomy with individual CRCs and CROs still formulating their own policies and priorities; ASTMS see the national harmonisation of policies as coming through enhanced joint consultative arrangements in which CROs would constitute a separate consultative unit. These two different perceptions about how centralised employment would operate are best illustrated in two quotations:

- (i) "There is no way that central employment can be equated with local control by the CRC, however many gestures are made in that direction, because the involvement of a CRC in the direction of a CROs work would become something within the Commission's discretion and not something which could be had as of right. An employer has the legal right to expect its employees to carry out its reasonable instructions and, no matter how much the Commission respected the wishes of the CRC, it could, at the end of the day, insist on having its own way."

(From an internal CRE discussion paper 1978)

- (ii) "It is argued in some quarters that the CRE because it is the employer of the CRO has the right to direct its employee to carry out its wishes. This is as naked an argument for treating a CRO as a pair of hands or brains as an old-fashioned industrialist of the 19th century. It runs clean against the concern . . . of workers jointly participating in the formulation of policy with the management of the work they are to undertake. It also takes no cognisance of the fact that CROs have to work with and through CRCs which also have strong views on how the work should be undertaken . . . What the change will do will be to equalise the pressures on the CRO." (ASTMS 1978)

It would be possible to centralise the employment of the 206 professional staff funded by the Commission and at the same time invite local authorities to undertake a similar role towards the larger number of professional and secretarial staff of CRCs who are financed by them (i.e. to become their employers, where this is not already the case, and second them to CRCs). This would relieve CRCs totally of the personnel management function. ASTMS have asked the Commission to go further, by accepting financial responsibility for *all* the professional and secretarial staff of CRCs. Even without the new posts which would undoubtedly be sought for the expansion and "equalisation" of the work, this would immediately increase the Commission's responsibility (and wages bill) for local staff to a complement of around 450.

Model 4. Central Employment of CROs and Appointed Committees

CROs would be recruited and employed by the Commission and would work to local appointed advisory committees, in boroughs, districts or counties as appropriate. The appointment of the committees could be undertaken by either

- (i) the Home Office
- or (ii) the CRE (with appropriate consultations)
- or (iii) local interests (e.g. the local CRC, the local authority, ethnic minority organisations, with the CRE able to make some direct nominations).

CRCs as at present constituted could continue to exist under this model as local pressure groups, but would not be either the employer or the adviser of CROs. CROs would be employed by the Commission and advised by the appointed committees. The position of staff funded from local sources is more complex; the most logical solution would be for local authorities to second such staff to the appointed committees (on which the authorities would be represented) to work with the Commission-employed professional staff. This model would probably allow the greatest degree of implementation of centrally formulated policy.

Model 5. Central Recruitment of CROs Employed by Appointed Committees

This model brings together the central recruitment proposed in Model 2 with the appointed committees proposed in Model 4. The appointed Committees would be the employers of centrally-recruited CROs. The personnel management function would thus remain at local level but would not lie with the CRC. One example of this structure which has been suggested would give local appointed committees constituted as follows:

- six representatives nominated by the local authorities;
- six representatives nominated by the CRE, and
- six representatives nominated by either the existing CRC or alternatively by ethnic minority groups in the area.

This appointed committee would have the function of local policy-maker and employer. It might include a small management committee of members drawn from the local authority and the CRE with professional and managerial experience who would be responsible for the employment function, with the full committee remaining responsible for policy and planning.

Model 6. Appointed Regional Committees Recruiting and Employing CROs Seconded to CRCs

This model is closest to Model 3, but the responsibility for recruitment and employment of CROs would move from national to regional level, whilst the concept of appointed committees would move from local to regional level. It is thus a compromise, aiming to mitigate the remoteness of central employment and the capriciousness of employment by local voluntary committees. CROs would be seconded to work with local CRCs as advisory committees, which would remain as the only committees with a *local* basis. Alternatively, CROs could be recruited centrally and employed regionally. Local authorities could employ and second the supporting staff to CRCs, or could finance the regional committees (on which they would be represented) to employ them. As in Model 4, the regional committees could be appointed by:

- either (i) the Home Office
- or (ii) the CRE (with appropriate consultations)
- or (iii) local interests (CRCs, local authorities, ethnic minority organisations in the region with some direct CRE nominations).

This model would be a close parallel of the probation service, a statutory service already within the experience of the Home Office.

Model 7. CROs Recruited and Employed by Local Authorities

Model 8. Responsibility for Local Race Relations work transferred to another National Agency

Either (i) the Home Office (the Inspectorate idea)

or (ii) a new statutory agency

or (iii) a voluntary agency (NACRC?)

5.4 Models 7 and 8 are included for the sake of completeness. The proposals were effectively rejected by the ministerial statement placing responsibility for local race relations work on the Commission for Racial Equality. They are not, therefore, included in the attached chart of implications.

5.5 No attempt has been made to quantify the financial costs to the Exchequer of any of the above models. It should be noted, however, that the present establishment of Commission-funded CROs is 206. Total salary grant-aid to CRCs for 1978/79 will amount to approximately £1,064,349. It is estimated that there are a further 270-300 professional and supporting staff employed by CRCs with funds from sources other than the Commission.

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IMPLICATIONS OF MODELS OF CRC CONSTITUTION AND CRO EMPLOYMENT

	CRCs	CROs	LOCAL AUTHORITIES	NACRC	ASTMS	CRE
MODEL 1. STATUS QUO	Retain autonomy and employment responsibilities. Continued need for improved management and financial control, training of volunteers and more effective policy planning and implementation.	Continued lack of mobility and career structure. Continued vulnerability to local pressures and allegiance to "3 masters" (CRC, LA and CRE). Lack of professional support/supervision.	No significant change. Continued unevenness in level and quality of CRC services.	Continue present function. May seek increased responsibility for fieldwork management/co-ordination. Need for improved joint consultative arrangements, involving need for more representative membership.	Would still need to resolve disputes with individual amateur committees. Continue negotiating rights with CRE/NACRC, and may seek increased role in national policy consultation. Scope for improved conditions of service.	Least opportunity for policy coordination. Lack of professional responsibility for officers it funds; inability to guarantee professional standards.
MODEL 2. CRCs AS CONSTITUTED WITH CENTRAL RECRUITMENT	Retain autonomy and employment responsibilities. Continued need for improved management and field services. Less direct involvement in recruitment, but professional quality of officers appointed may be improved.	Appointment on merit (local pressures in selection process reduced). Possibly a more professional cadre of CROs, but otherwise disadvantages of Model 1 remain.	Possibly a more professional cadre of CROs. Reduced involvement in selection process.	Possible involvement in central recruitment process and thereby in raising professional standards for their members. Otherwise as in Model 1.	Possibly more professional membership. Otherwise as in Model 1.	Possibly more professional cadre of CROs. Increased scope for systematic initial training. Small increase in staff workload and costs. Greater risk of accusations of bias in selection. Still lack policy co-ordination, and otherwise as in Model 1.
MODEL 3. CENTRAL EMPLOYMENT OF CROs	Lose overall control of CROs' work, but retain advisory role on policy implementation. Shed personnel management responsibilities (except for non-Commission-funded staff, unless local authorities accept this function). More scope for policy disagreements with CROs and "transfer" requests. Possible loss of interest by volunteers as a result of inability fully to direct staff.	Enhanced job security, mobility and career structure. Interchangeability with CRE posts? Consistent professional support/supervision. More consistent policy co-ordination. More scope for policy disagreements with CRCs and "transfer" requests. Scope for operation across local authority boundaries. More opportunity for specialisation.	No longer involved in CRO selection, but should benefit from more professional service. Authorities may be invited to employ and second non-Commission-funded staff to CRCs.	Possible involvement in central selection, but loss of negotiation rights over conditions of service, training, etc. More involvement in disputes between CRCs and centrally-employed CROs. Changed role in policy development and co-ordination, but consultative arrangements likely to remain. Loss of CROs' membership.	More professional membership. Scope for industrial democracy transferred to national organisation; possible disputes with CRE over policy. Possible increase in disputes with CRCs, but only one employer to negotiate with Negotiation of Civil Service conditions? More scope to develop as a professional body in addition to trade union function.	Gain overall national policy control. Gain personnel management function. Opportunity to enhance professional standards through consistent recruitment and more professionally-based training. Possible increase in disputes. ASTMS participation built into CRE. Staffing implications arising from central selection/personnel management and from regional support/supervision. More flexible deployment of CROs across local authority boundaries and through specialisation.
MODEL 4. CENTRAL EMPLOYMENT OF CROs AND APPOINTED COMMITTEES	Lose control of CROs' work and yield to the appointed committees the function of adviser to CROs. Possible consequent loss of local authority grant-aid and their status as "acknowledged experts" on race relations. But might have nominated rights to appointed committees, and some of their members would join these committees.	Benefits of Model 3. A more "professional" support group. Reduced committee administration and involvement in CRC internal politics. Likelihood of fewer disputes.	As Model 3, but may also nominate members to a local advisory committee with statutory backing. Implications for authorities in taking advice of appointed Committee, while not losing sight of representations from the voluntary sector.	As Model 3. Possible replacement by a new body representing appointed committees; or NACRC may decide to continue as federation of entirely voluntary CRCs. This choice would determine NACRC's impact on national consultations.	As Model 3, with likelihood of fewer disputes.	As Model 3. Danger of involvement in patronage, unless appointments system carefully designed. Need to defend credibility of advisory committees. May become a magnet for complaints about representation on committees (ethnic balance, political stance, etc.). Administration of appointments system, as well as central employment, would have staffing/cost implications.
MODEL 5. CENTRAL RECRUITMENT WITH APPOINTED COMMITTEES	Implications of appointed committees as in Model 4. Central recruitment may improve professionalism of officers appointed. Responsibility of appointed committees for policy-making and personnel management emphasises their role as successors to CRCs.	Appointment on merit (with little impact from local pressures). A more professional cadre of CROs, but not mobile as in Models 3 and 4. More "professional" support group, with reduced committee administration and fewer disputes.	Possibly a more professional cadre of CROs. May nominate members to a local policy-making committee with statutory backing.	Possible involvement in central recruitment process and raising professional standards. Possible replacement by a new body representing appointed committees (or NACRC may continue as federation of CRCs).	Possibly more professional membership with likelihood of fewer disputes. Would have to negotiate disputes with individual committees which may, however, have more "professional" approach.	Implications of appointed committees as in Model 4. Central recruitment may provide more professional, better trained cadre of CROs. But lacks full opportunity for policy co-ordination and guaranteeing of professional standards which central employment might bring.
MODEL 6. APPOINTED REGIONAL COMMITTEES EMPLOYING CROs SECONDED TO CRCs.	Lose overall control of CROs' work, but retain advisory role on policy implementation. This role would not be lost to any other committee at local level. Shed personnel management function (except for non-Commission-funded staff, unless local authorities accept this function). May have representation on regional committees and thereby involvement in regional/national policy formulation. This may partly compensate for loss of direction of staff by voluntary members.	Enhanced job security, mobility and career structure within region, with possibility of transfer to other regions and to CRE. Consistent professional support/supervision. Involvement in consistent policy co-ordination on regional basis, though some scope for disagreements with CRCs. Scope for operation across local authority boundaries. More opportunity for specialisation.	No longer involved in CRO selection, but should benefit from more professional service, sensitive to regional needs (i.e. not "Whitehall" staff). Authorities may be invited to employ and second non-Commission-funded staff to CRCs, or to finance regional committees to do the same. Authorities would be represented on regional committees, but local government structure lacks a suitable regional level to facilitate this.	Possible involvement in central or regional recruitment process. Changed role in policy development and co-ordination, but consultative arrangements possible at regional and national levels. Likely loss of CROs' membership.	More professional membership. Scope for industrial democracy transferred to regional organisation; possible disputes with regional committees over policy. Fewer (regional) employers to negotiate with in event of local disputes.	Increased scope for national policy co-ordination through regional committees. Danger of patronage less than in Models 4 and 5, as fewer committees. Need for development of regional organisation of the Commission, to service committees and provide support/supervision to CROs. Staffing implications of central or regional recruitment, but administration of appointments system much less than in Models 4 and 5. May be need for regional, as well as national, consultative arrangements. More flexible deployment of CROs across local authority boundaries and through specialisation.

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